

COUNTRY Eastern Germany
 TOPIC Brandis Airfield

REPORT NO.

EVALUATION see below

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DATE OF CONTENT 19 August to 4 September 1952

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DATE PREPARED 14 October 1952

REFERENCES

PAGES 4 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE) 3 - sketches on ditto

REMARKS

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1. Until 2 p.m. on 23 August 1952, there was no flying at Brandis airfield. Twenty-three twin-engine planes fitted with in-line engines and single tail assemblies were parked at the field. (1)
2. Between 5 and 7 p.m. on 19 and 22 August, parachuting from two captive balloons was observed near the field. On 20 August, one captive balloon was seen. The area was cordoned off by sentries wearing black epaulets with insignia similar to those previously worn by members of German military bands. (2) The captive balloons were boarded by three or four men and then raised to an altitude of about 250 meters. Two or three men would jump in succession, using parachutes equipped with static lines. The parachutes opened after a fall of about 15 meters. Motor vehicles and personnel were observed at the place from which the two captive balloons ascended alternately. It appeared to source that the parachutists were receiving basic jump training. (3)

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3. At 11:30 a.m. on 26 August, Li-2 [] was observed circling over the field. A Po-2 was also seen aloft. The two planes landed about noon. A biplane was circling over the installation at 5 p.m. About noon on 27 August, a Li-2 took off for local flying. From 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on 28 August, there was flying by Li-2s. Until late August, about 30 Li-2s were parked in groups of 10 at the field. []

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[] Li-2s were definitely parked in hangars of the installation. Two Po-2s were also observed at the field. A high-wing monoplane would land at intervals of one to three days at the field, which was occupied by an estimated 1,200 men who wore black-bordered blue and red-bordered black epaulets. Most of the latter had tank insignia, but some had motor transport insignia. The personnel stationed at the field looked like Mongolians, particularly the flying personnel. Security measures at the field were less strict than during the period when the installation was used by jet fighters. German personnel were employed at the field and more civilians were said to be hired. (6)

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4. It appeared that the flying personnel were well trained. The assembling of planes in formation and the breaking of formations was well executed. [] a formation, which flew in a flight V formation, very quickly changed

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over into flight line formation. Intervals were kept very well. When one plane, which flew in the middle of the formation, lost altitude, probably because of engine trouble, the other planes closed up without delay. [redacted] a German employed at the field [redacted] from a distance of about 30 meters, a plane the cockpit of which was blinded at the front and one side; whether the cockpit was blinded also on the other side could not be determined. Take-offs and landings were also performed efficiently at night. The planes landed and took off in succession. About half of the runway was lighted by white lamps. When aircraft were about to land, two searchlights illuminated the edges of the runway for a short time. The planes used two searchlights while taking off or landing at night. (7)

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5. During the second half of August, about 1,200 men were given parachute training in the wooded area northwest of the field. [redacted] the trainees involved were tank soldiers. (3) In the northwestern corner of the field, [redacted] five to six bars mounted at an altitude of about six meters. Five to six parachute harnesses used by trainees were fastened to these bars. (8) Parachuting from captive balloons, apparently the second phase of parachute training, was also observed. Two captive balloons were taken by trucks to fields northwest of the airfield, where a unit of 200 to 300 men had assembled. The balloons were boarded by three men, who would jump in succession from an altitude of 300 to 400 meters. The static lines of the parachutes were fastened to the balloon basket. After the last man had jumped, the balloon was lowered and occupied by another group of three men. The whole procedure lasted six to seven minutes. (3) After jumping from balloons at least some of the trainees would jump individually from Li-2s flying at an altitude of 600 meters. [redacted] the trainees posted themselves at the edge of the plane and then allowed themselves to fall backwards. (9) The parachutists pulled the rip cord of their parachutes themselves. Some of the trainees allowed themselves to fall 200 meters before they pulled the rip cord. Mass parachuting was also observed; up to eight parachutists jumped from Li-2s flying in formation. The owners of the fields on which this training was conducted were informed that they would have the fields at their disposal on 5 September.

6. Between 15 and 29 August 1952, [redacted] increased parachute training at the field. The parachutists jumped in group of three from a captive balloon. Flying by Li-2s was also seen. (3)

7. Between 10 a.m. and noon on 30 August, two Li-2s circled for 20 minutes over the field. At 4 p.m. on 1 September, Li-2s [redacted] off for 20 minute flights. Between 10 a.m. and noon on 3 September, two Li-2s flew in formation at an altitude of 400 to 500 meters. They would disappear and then approach the field from various directions. (10) At 8 a.m. on 4 September, a Li-2 circled widely over the field. The weather was rainy. No parachuting from aircraft was observed at Brandis between 30 August and 4 September.

8. [redacted]

9. It appeared that the landing field was to be surrounded with a fence. On 2 September, two Soviet officers, a town councillor from Brandis and the mayor drove along the boundaries of the field. The mayor subsequently announced that the fields within these boundaries had to be harvested without delay. Holes were being dug, probably for the poles of the intended fence on the

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western border of the installation. (12)

10. Between 4 and 5:30 p.m. on 4 September, 10 officers and 30 men who wore black-bordered red epaulets practiced firing with sub-machine guns.
11. In a wooded area bordering on the northwestern corner of the field, there was a tent camp occupied by soldiers, who were given parachute training. The tents seemed to be 30 x 6 meters large and two meters high and had an estimated capacity of 50 men. [redacted] several field kitchens had been seen by him at the edge of the woods. On 3 September, four inflated balloons were seen in the woods on Schuetzendammweg.

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12. Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on 30 August, parachute jumps were made from two balloons moored at an altitude of about 300 meters. Three men were seen in one balloon basket, while the other balloon basket was occupied by four men. The parachutists would jump at intervals of 10 seconds. After the three and four men had jumped, the static lines were pulled back, so that an additional man must have been in each of the two balloon baskets. On the day of observation, the jumpers wore a reserve parachute. When the parachutists had descended for about 100 meters, they opened the second and smaller parachute. (13)

[redacted] the parachutists steered their parachutes by pulling individual shroud lines. No parachuting was observed on 31 August. Between 2 and 6 p.m. on 1 September, there was parachuting from two balloons, one balloon making 10 ascents within one hour. Parachuting was also observed from two balloons during the mornings of 2 and 3 September. There was intermittent rain. Between 4 and 6:30 p.m. on 4 September, there was again parachuting from two balloons in intermittent rain. Details on a possible cooperation between the parachute unit and the air transport unit stationed at Brandis airfield could not be determined. [redacted] the parachutists, after jumping from the balloons, would subsequently jump from aircraft, because parachuting from planes was rare.

13. On 4 September, [redacted] soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets proceeded along the road leading from Brandis to the camp of the parachute unit. Some time later, [redacted] soldiers wearing red-bordered black and black-bordered blue epaulets was seen on the same road.

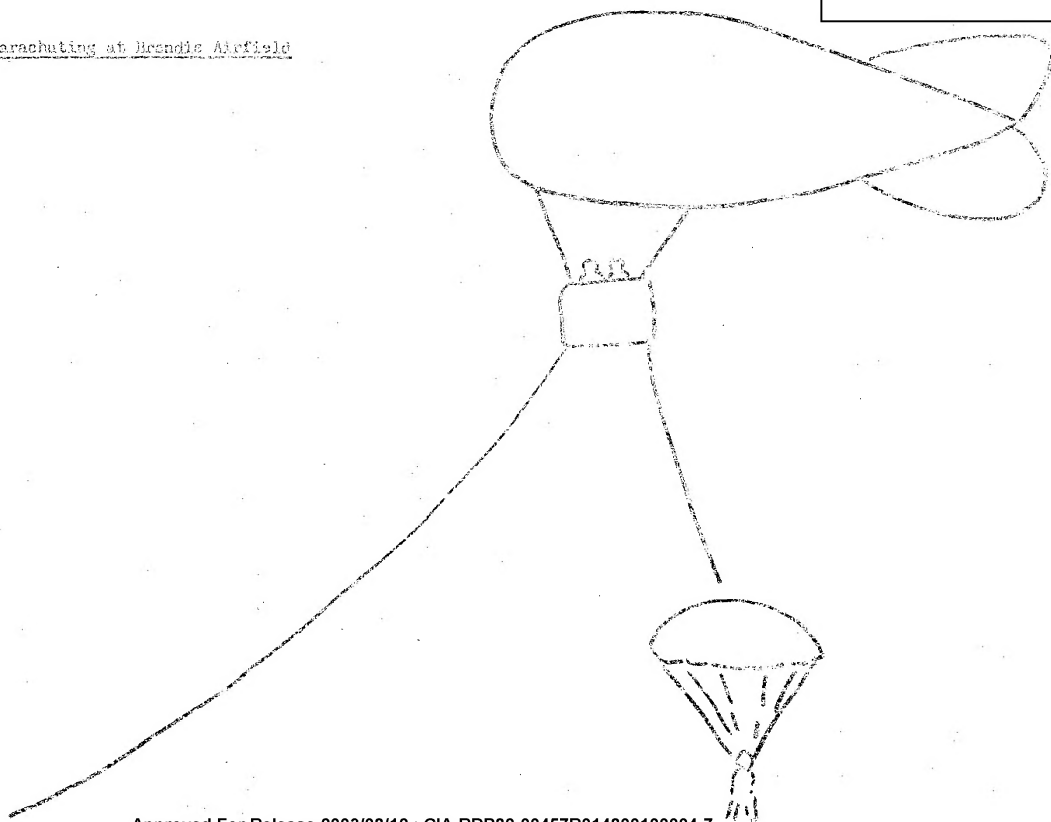
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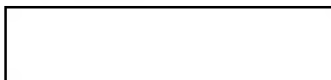
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Balloon Used For Parachuting at Brandis Airfield

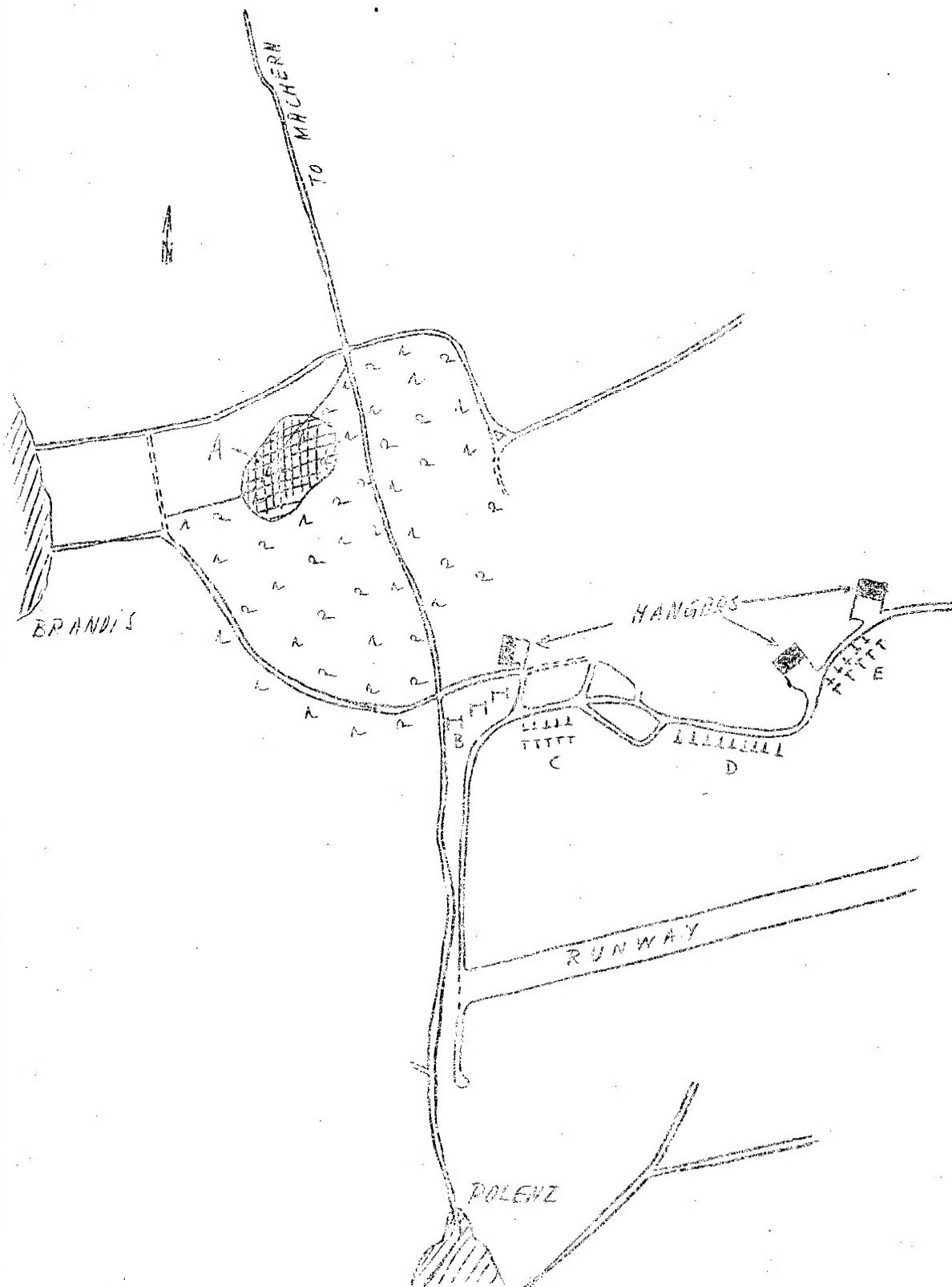


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Layout Sketch of Brandis Airfield



Legend: See next page.

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Legend:

- A. Tent camp with about 100 tents.
- B. Packs used for the training of parachutists. (For detail sketch, see Annex 3)
- C, D, and E. Aircraft dispersal areas each for one squadron.

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